

Message Text

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ACTION IO-13

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FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1537

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AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO

AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAID, UNDP, BR

SUBJ: UNDP REPORT ON ITS FUTURE ROLE: COMMENTS OF ACTING

RESREP IN BRAZIL

REF: STATE 86320

1. ECON/COMMERCIAL COUNSELOR AND ECONOFF MET MAY 3 WITH ACTING UNDP RESREP REINHART HELMKE TO DISCUSS QUESTIONS RAISED PARA 5 REFTEL. HELMKE HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN PROVIDED WITH A COPY OF THESE QUESTIONS SO HE WAS PREPARED FOR DISCUSSION. HELMKE RESPONDED TO QUESTIONS WITH INTELLIGENCE AND CANDOR. A SUMMARY OF HIS REMARKS FOLLOWS BELOW IN THE FORMAT ESTABLISHED PARA 5 REFTEL

2. THE PROBLEM OF EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK: HELMKE APPEARED SATISFIED THAT CURRENT UNDP FEEDBACK MECHANISMS WERE ADEQUATE. HE MENTIONED THAT A SPECIAL OFFICE HAD RECENTLY BEEN ESTABLISHED IN UNDP HEADQUARTERS SPECIFICALLY TO BRING TO BEAR ON NEW PROJECT PROPOSALS THE EXPERIENCE GAINED IN SIMILAR PREVIOUS PROJECTS.

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HE DID SAY, HOWEVER, THAT IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO HAVE REGIONAL RESREP CONFERENCES SO THAT EXPERIENCES COULD BE EXCHANGED AT THE RESREP LEVEL.

3. THE PROBLEM OF COORDINATION: HELMKE DID NOT MENTION ANY SPECIFIC COORDINATION PROBLEMS WITH UNDP HEADQUARTERS, ALTHOUGH HE DID SAY THAT THERE

WAS A TENDENCY FOR THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES TO TRY TO GET ADDITIONAL RESOURCES BEYOND THE 14 PERCENT OVERHEAD ALREADY ALLOTTED BY UNDP. HE REFERRED TO UNDP HEADQUARTERS PROBLEMS MAINLY IN THE PAST TENSE, BECAUSE HE STRONGLY BELIEVES THAT THE 1970 CONSENSUS SUCCEEDED IN ESTABLISHING UNDP AS THE COORDINATOR FOR ALL UN DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE. IN TERMS OF FIELD COORDINATION, HELMKE SAID THAT IN BRAZIL AT LEAST THE RESREP WAS FIRMLY ESTABLISHED AS THE COORDINATOR AND FOCAL POINT FOR ALL UNDP ACTIVITIES. HELMKE REFERRED TO THE PAST EFFORTS OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF FAO TO ESTABLISH HIS FIELD REPRESENTATIVES IN RELATIVE INDEPENDENCE OF THE SENIOR UN REP BUT SAID THIS HAD NOT BEEN A PROBLEM IN BRAZIL.

4. FUTURE ROLES FOR THE UNDP: ACCORDING TO HELMKE, THE UNDP WILL ALWAYS HAVE A ROLE IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES BECAUSE THE UNDP IS QUALIFIED TO GIVE NON-PARTISAN, UNINTERESTED ASSESSMENT AND ADVICE TO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNERS. HE POINTED TO THE UNDP'S CHANGING ROLE IN BRAZIL AS INDICATIVE OF THE METAMORPHOSIS OF UNDP ACTIVITIES AS THE RECIPIENT COUNTRY MOVED UP THE DEVELOPMENT SCALE: THE UNDP ORIGINALLY EMPHASIZED PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT IN BRAZIL; BUT NOW THE EMPHASIS IS ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT. HE FELT THAT THE PRESENT UNDP FIELD OFFICE STRUCTURE WAS FULLY CAPABLE OF MANAGING PRESENT AND FUTURE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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UNDP DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE.

5. INCREASED UNDP RESOURCES: THE QUESTION OF INCREASED OR MORE DEPENDABLE FUNDING WAS ONE THAT HELMKE DID NOT TOUCH ON DIRECTLY. HE DISCUSSED THE PROBLEM OF INCREASED ARAB INFLUENCE RESULTING FROM INCREASED OPEC COUNTRY CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE UNDP AND ITS SPECIALIZED AGENCIES. WHILE HE NOTED THAT IT SEEMED REASONABLE FOR THE DONOR COUNTRIES TO WANT TO INFLUENCE THE PRIORITIES OF THE RECIPIENT AGENCIES, HE ALSO RECOGNIZED THE PROBLEM OF INCREASED POLITICIZATION OF THE AGENCIES AND THE POSSIBLE CONSEQUENT DECLINE IN THE QUALITY OF THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY THEM. IN TERMS OF COST-SHARING OF UNDP PROGRAMS BY RECIPIENT GOVERNMENTS, HELMKE POINTED OUT THAT THE GOB WAS ALREADY PROVIDING UP TO 90 PERCENT OF THE COSTS OF PROJECTS IN WHICH THE UNDP PARTICIPATES, AND THAT IN ADDITION BRAZIL WAS CONTRIBUTING TO THE UNDP GENERAL FUND.

6. UNDP GENERAL FUND: HELMKE EXPRESSED STRONG
SUPPORT FOR THE GENERAL FUND. HE FELT THAT HAVING
A GENERAL FUND WAS THE ONLY WAY TO ASSURE THAT ALL
UNDP RESOURCES WERE ALLOCATED BY A RATIONAL, PROGRAM-
BASED METHOD. HE DID RECOGNIZE, HOWEVER, THE
LEGITIMACY OF LARGE DONOR COUNTRIES HAVING SOME SAY
OVER THE GENERAL FUND'S PRIORITIES AND FOR THIS
REASON, TOWARDS THE END OF THE CONVERSATION AND IN
A SERIES OF MORE PRIVATE INFORMAL COMMENTS, CONVEYED
CONSIDERABLE SYMPATHY FOR WESTERN DONORS AT LEAST
PARTICALLY EARMARKING THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS IN SOME FASHION,
THEREBY TO HELP WARD OFF OR LIMIT
UNDUE POLITICAL INFLUENCE. (SEE PARA 5 ABOVE)
CRIMMINS

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Message Attributes

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